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UNCLAS BAKU 000780

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E.O. 12958: NA

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SUBJECT: Embassy Baku Concurrence on FY08 Requests for Section
1206-Funded Projects

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

¶1. (U) The Office of Defense Cooperation at US Embassy Baku, in conjunction with US European Command, has developed several requests for funding under section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act. The Chief of Mission strongly supports these requests as being significant proposed contributions to the war on terror. As required by the procedures to request Section 1206 funding for FY08, this message provides Chief of Mission concurrence for the projects listed.

¶2. (SBU) With a strategic position on the periphery of the Middle East, significant energy reserves, and an ambitious security reform agenda, Azerbaijan is an increasingly important partner for the United States. Since September 11, 2001, Azerbaijan has been a steadfast partner in the Global War on Terrorism, contributing troops to Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo, and providing unlimited overflight and landing rights for Coalition planes bound for Afghanistan and Iraq. Azerbaijan has demonstrated both a strong will and a growing capacity to support global counterterrorism objectives and military and stability operations. It needs targeted, time-sensitive training and equipment to further expand its capacity to support these operations.

¶3. (U) With this in mind, the Office of Defense Cooperation, U.S. Embassy Azerbaijan, in conjunction with U.S. European Command, has developed several requests for Section 1206 funding.

¶A. (SBU) Ground Control Approach Radar (GCA) for Nasosnaya Airfield (estimated 5.7M USD). In its Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO, Azerbaijan has committed itself to upgrading a military airfield to NATO standards for potential use by alliance or coalition aircraft in support of ongoing operations. Currently the U.S. is assisting in developing the airfield by upgrading air traffic control systems through FMF. The next phase of equipment upgrade is a Ground Control Approach (GCA). A GCA would provide for radar approach control service to include sequencing and separation of aircraft, navigation assistance, and airspace control services within the terminal airspace area. Given current Azeri support for Coalition aircraft en route to Afghanistan and Iraq, upgrades at Nasosnaya could longer-term provide additional possibilities for Azeri support to Coalition activities.

¶B. (U) NATO-Compatible Communications for AZE Mobile Unit. (estimated 4.5M USD). As part of its NATO IPAP, Azerbaijan has

committed itself to establishing a NATO-Compatible "Mobile Battalion" for potential use in NATO operations. Currently, one company has been declared for NATO's Operational Capability Concept (OCC) and Azerbaijan has stated its intention to declare the company for use in the NATO Reaction Force (NRF) by 2009. As Azerbaijan develops the battalion, this 1206 project would provide the unit with battalion-level tactical communications.

1C. (U) Azerbaijan Naval Commando Unit Counter-terrorism training (estimated 2M USD). As part of its NATO IPAP, Azerbaijan has pledged to increase the capability of its naval forces to interdict transnational threats on the Caspian Sea, and to assist in the fight against terrorism. Toward this end, the Ministry of Defense has worked closely with the United States Department of Defense for the past two years to increase the response capabilities of Azerbaijani navy divers and naval commandos as part of the Caspian Maritime Security program. Azerbaijani divers and naval commandos have received U.S. training, equipment, and familiarization on interdiction techniques against surface vessels suspected of carrying contraband on the Caspian Sea, as well as training to react to terrorist acts against energy infrastructure. To date, training has been conducted through Blackwater Corporation. The program intends to continue training with Blackwater Corporation to sustain the Naval Commandos' current level of tactical skills with new entry training; develop their capability to conduct operational planning and command control; and develop the Azerbaijan Navy's capability to sustain the unit by developing its own program of New Entry Training.

14. (SBU) The 1206 requests listed above are consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in our security cooperation programs as well as our Mission Strategic Plan. The proposed 1206 projects address the objectives of the Caspian Maritime Security Program, specifically by developing Azerbaijan's capability for maintaining and increasing contributions to coalition and alliance operations, and combating terrorism. They also support Azerbaijan's NATO IPAP and hence our long-term security and reform objectives. The Chief of Mission strongly supports the submitted 1206 requests for FY08.

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